

**Second Regular Session  
Seventy-fourth General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO**

**REREVISED**

*This Version Includes All Amendments  
Adopted in the Second House*

LLS NO. 24-0139.01 Alana Rosen x2606

**SENATE BILL 24-007**

**SENATE SPONSORSHIP**

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McCluskie, Ortiz, Parenti, Rutinel, Snyder, Valdez, Willford, Young

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**Senate Committees**

Health & Human Services  
Appropriations

**House Committees**

Health & Human Services  
Appropriations

HOUSE  
3rd Reading Unamended  
May 8, 2024

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**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

101      **CONCERNING CREATING A BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING**  
102                      **PROGRAM IN THE OFFICE OF SUICIDE PREVENTION, AND, IN**  
103                      **CONNECTION THEREWITH, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.**

HOUSE  
2nd Reading Unamended  
May 7, 2024

**Bill Summary**

*(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)*

SENATE  
3rd Reading Unamended  
May 1, 2024

The bill creates the behavioral health first aid training program (training program) in the office of suicide prevention (office) in the department of public health and environment. The purpose of the training program is to:

- Improve overall community climate and promote adult,

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.  
*Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.*  
*Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.*

SENATE  
Amended 2nd Reading  
April 30, 2024

teen, and youth behavioral health, mental health, and mental well-being;

- Train educators and school staff; employees of community-based, youth-based, or nonprofit organizations; employees of organizations that serve underserved populations; faith-based community members; law enforcement officers; first responders; and active duty or retired military personnel (candidates) to recognize the warning signs and symptoms of mental illness and substance use among adults, teens, and youth;
- Train candidates on how to respond to an adult, teen, or youth who is experiencing mental health or substance use challenges;
- Train candidates on crisis intervention strategies and best practices;
- Prepare candidates to teach adults and teens how to recognize warning signs and symptoms of mental health or substance use challenges;
- Prepare candidates to teach teens how to find a responsible and trusted adult for assistance when a peer is struggling with mental health or substance use challenges; and
- Prepare candidates to teach adults how to respond to a teen or youth struggling with a mental health or substance use challenge or crisis.

The office is required to contract with a Colorado-based nonprofit organization (third-party entity) to offer and administer the training program to organizations that apply to participate and are accepted in the training program that include, but are not limited to, school districts, district charter schools, institute charter schools, boards of cooperative services, the Colorado school for the deaf and the blind, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, organizations that serve underserved communities, law enforcement agencies, first responder organizations, military forces, and faith-based organizations (organizations). Subject to available appropriations, the training program is available at no cost to the organizations selected to participate.

The bill requires the office to promulgate rules to establish criteria for an application process. The third-party entity shall create an application process based on the rules promulgated by the office.

The office shall use pre- and post-course surveys developed by a national mental and behavioral health organization to evaluate the effectiveness of the training program. The third-party entity shall administer the pre- and post-course surveys to collect evaluation data from the organizations.

The third-party entity shall submit a report to the office summarizing the evaluation data collected. The office is required to

include a summary of the evaluation data collected and recommendations, if necessary, concerning the training program in the office's annual report submitted to the general assembly each November 1.

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1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly  
3 finds and declares that:

4 (a) Mental health challenges affect all age groups, races, ethnic  
5 groups, and socioeconomic classes;

6 (b) The most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and  
7 Prevention shows that in 2018, Colorado had one of the 10 highest  
8 age-adjusted suicide death rates in the nation with 21.9 deaths per  
9 100,000 Coloradans;

10 (c) Calls and texts to the Colorado crisis line steadily increased  
11 during the COVID-19 pandemic;

12 (d) As of 2021, many Coloradans, including nearly one in 5 teens  
13 or youth, live with mental health challenges;

14 (e) Since the Children's Hospital Colorado declared a youth  
15 mental health state of emergency in 2021, Colorado's mental health crisis  
16 among teens and youth has not improved;

17 (f) According to the 2022 State of Mental Health in America  
18 Report, Colorado had one of the highest shares of adults with mental  
19 illness, with roughly one in 4 adults having a mental illness;

20 (g) Many more Coloradans are affected by the mental health  
21 challenges of someone else, such as a close friend, family member, or  
22 classmate;

23 (h) Mental health education increases awareness of mental health  
24 challenges, educates individuals on how to seek help, and reduces the

1 stigma associated with mental health challenges;

2 (i) Mental health crisis statistics for teens and youth are alarming  
3 and constitute a call to action. According to the national statistics for teen  
4 mental health reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,  
5 in 2021:

6 (I) Suicide was the third leading cause of death among teens and  
7 youth between 14 and 18 years of age;

8 (II) 22% of teens and youth seriously considered attempting  
9 suicide; 18% of teens and youth made a suicide plan; and 10% of teens  
10 and youth did attempt suicide; and

11 (III) 29% of teens and youth have experienced poor mental health.

12 (j) According to the Colorado Health Access Survey, the number  
13 of Colorado teens and youth 18 years of age and younger who have  
14 reported having 8 or more days of poor mental health over the past 30  
15 days has more than doubled in 6 years; and

16 (k) Between 2016 and 2021, emergency room visits for mental  
17 health reasons have increased for teens and youth by 140%. Visits for  
18 self-harm have more than tripled.

19 (2) The general assembly finds, therefore, that it is necessary for  
20 the state to expand its efforts to improve the mental health and well-being  
21 of all Coloradans by establishing and implementing the behavioral health  
22 first aid training program. The behavioral health first aid training program  
23 is a vital initiative to address the mental and behavioral health needs of  
24 Coloradans to foster supportive environments within Colorado  
25 communities.

26 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 25-1.5-113.5 as  
27 follows:

1           **25-1.5-113.5. Behavioral health first aid training program -**  
2           **creation - appropriation - report - rules - definitions - repeal.** (1) AS

3 USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

4           (a) "BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM" MEANS  
5 THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM CREATED IN  
6 SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION.

7           (b) "CANDIDATE" MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO ATTENDS THE  
8 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM TO TEACH COURSES  
9 TO ADULTS AND TEENS. CANDIDATES MAY INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED  
10 TO, EDUCATORS AND SCHOOL STAFF; EMPLOYEES OF COMMUNITY-BASED,  
11 YOUTH-FOCUSED, OR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS; EMPLOYEES OF  
12 ORGANIZATIONS THAT SERVE UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS; FAITH-BASED  
13 COMMUNITY MEMBERS; LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS; FIRST RESPONDERS;  
14 AND ACTIVE DUTY OR RETIRED MILITARY PERSONNEL.

15           (c) "DEPARTMENT" MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
16 AND ENVIRONMENT CREATED AND EXISTING PURSUANT TO SECTION  
17 25-1-102.

18           (d) "LOCAL EDUCATION PROVIDER" MEANS A SCHOOL DISTRICT, A  
19 CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZED BY A SCHOOL DISTRICT PURSUANT TO PART  
20 1 OF ARTICLE 30.5 OF TITLE 22, A CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZED BY THE  
21 STATE CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE PURSUANT TO PART 5 OF ARTICLE 30.5  
22 OF TITLE 22, A BOARD OF COOPERATIVE SERVICES CREATED AND  
23 OPERATING PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 5 OF TITLE 22 THAT OPERATES ONE OR  
24 MORE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, OR THE COLORADO SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND  
25 THE BLIND.

26           (e) "OFFICE OF SUICIDE PREVENTION" OR "OFFICE" MEANS THE  
27 OFFICE OF SUICIDE PREVENTION IN THE DEPARTMENT, ESTABLISHED

1 PURSUANT TO SECTION 25-1.5-101 (1)(w).

2 (f) "ORGANIZATION" MEANS AN ORGANIZATION THAT APPLIES TO  
3 PARTICIPATE IN THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM.  
4 ORGANIZATIONS MAY INCLUDE LOCAL EDUCATION PROVIDERS, LOCAL  
5 PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCIES, COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS,  
6 NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS THAT SERVE UNDERSERVED  
7 POPULATIONS, FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, LAW ENFORCEMENT  
8 AGENCIES, FIRST RESPONDER ORGANIZATIONS, AND MILITARY FORCES.

9 (g) "THIRD-PARTY ENTITY" MEANS A COLORADO-BASED  
10 NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION THAT HAS EXPERIENCE IMPLEMENTING  
11 EVIDENCE-BASED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAMS  
12 STATEWIDE.

13 (2) (a) THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM IS  
14 CREATED IN THE OFFICE OF SUICIDE PREVENTION WITHIN THE  
15 DEPARTMENT. THE PURPOSE OF THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID  
16 TRAINING PROGRAM IS TO:

17 (I) IMPROVE OVERALL COMMUNITY CLIMATE AND PROMOTE  
18 ADULT, TEEN, AND YOUTH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH, AND  
19 MENTAL WELL-BEING;

20 (II) TRAIN CANDIDATES TO RECOGNIZE THE WARNING SIGNS AND  
21 SYMPTOMS OF MENTAL ILLNESS AND SUBSTANCE USE AMONG ADULTS,  
22 TEENS, AND YOUTH;

23 (III) TRAIN CANDIDATES ON HOW TO RESPOND TO AN ADULT, TEEN,  
24 OR YOUTH WHO IS EXPERIENCING MENTAL HEALTH OR SUBSTANCE USE  
25 CHALLENGES;

26 (IV) TRAIN CANDIDATES ON CRISIS INTERVENTION STRATEGIES  
27 AND BEST PRACTICES;

1 (V) PREPARE CANDIDATES TO TEACH ADULTS AND TEENS HOW TO  
2 RECOGNIZE WARNING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND  
3 SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGES;

4 (VI) PREPARE CANDIDATES TO TEACH TEENS HOW TO FIND A  
5 RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTED ADULT FOR ASSISTANCE WHEN A PEER IS  
6 STRUGGLING WITH MENTAL HEALTH OR SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGES; AND

7 (VII) PREPARE CANDIDATES TO TEACH ADULTS HOW TO RESPOND  
8 TO A TEEN OR YOUTH STRUGGLING WITH A MENTAL HEALTH OR  
9 SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGE OR CRISIS.

10 (b) THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM MUST  
11 INCLUDE TRAIN-THE-TRAINER PROGRAMS AND ASSOCIATED CURRICULUM  
12 TO PREPARE CANDIDATES TO TEACH CERTIFICATION TRAINING COURSES  
13 TO:

14 (I) TEENS WHO ARE FIFTEEN YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER BUT UNDER  
15 NINETEEN YEARS OF AGE ON HOW TO IDENTIFY THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS  
16 OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGES, HAVE  
17 CONVERSATIONS REGARDING MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE  
18 CHALLENGES, AND SEEK THE HELP OF A RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTED  
19 ADULT;

20 (II) ADULTS WHO REGULARLY INTERACT WITH YOUTH WHO ARE  
21 TWELVE YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER BUT UNDER NINETEEN YEARS OF AGE ON  
22 HOW TO IDENTIFY, UNDERSTAND, AND RESPOND TO SIGNS OF MENTAL  
23 HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGES IN YOUTH WHO ARE TWELVE  
24 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER BUT UNDER NINETEEN YEARS OF AGE; AND

25 (III) ADULTS ON HOW TO IDENTIFY, UNDERSTAND, AND RESPOND  
26 TO SIGNS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGES IN  
27 ADULTS.

1           (3) THE OFFICE SHALL CONTRACT WITH A THIRD-PARTY ENTITY TO  
2 ADMINISTER AND OFFER THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING  
3 PROGRAM TO ORGANIZATIONS.

4           (4) (a) THE OFFICE SHALL PROMULGATE RULES FOR THE  
5 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM, INCLUDING CRITERIA  
6 FOR ESTABLISHING AN APPLICATION PROCESS FOR ORGANIZATIONS TO  
7 APPLY TO THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM.

8           (b) THE THIRD-PARTY ENTITY SHALL CREATE AN APPLICATION  
9 PROCESS AND ESTABLISH GUIDELINES TO ADMINISTER THE APPLICATION  
10 PROCESS BASED ON THE RULES PROMULGATED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION  
11 (4)(a) OF THIS SECTION.

12           (c) IN SELECTING ORGANIZATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE  
13 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM, THE THIRD-PARTY  
14 ENTITY SHALL PRIORITIZE THE ORGANIZATION'S:

- 15           (I) GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY;
- 16           (II) EXISTING RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE; AND
- 17           (III) PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID  
18 TRAINING PROGRAM AND ASSOCIATED CURRICULUM.

19           (d) SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE APPROPRIATIONS, THE THIRD-PARTY  
20 ENTITY SHALL OFFER THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING  
21 PROGRAM AT NO COST TO SELECTED ORGANIZATIONS.

22           (e) THE OFFICE AND THE THIRD-PARTY ENTITY MAY COLLABORATE  
23 WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO OFFER MENTAL HEALTH  
24 RESOURCES TO LOCAL EDUCATION PROVIDERS.

25           (5) (a) THE OFFICE SHALL USE PRE- AND POST-COURSE SURVEYS  
26 DEVELOPED BY A NATIONAL MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
27 ORGANIZATION TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BEHAVIORAL



1 HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM. THE THIRD-PARTY ENTITY SHALL  
2 ADMINISTER THE PRE- AND POST-COURSE SURVEYS TO COLLECT  
3 EVALUATION DATA FROM ORGANIZATIONS THAT PARTICIPATE IN THE  
4 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM. THE THIRD-PARTY  
5 ENTITY SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE OFFICE SUMMARIZING THE  
6 EVALUATION DATA AND RECOMMENDATIONS, IF NECESSARY, TO IMPROVE  
7 THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM.

8 (b) THE OFFICE SHALL SUMMARIZE THE REPORT DESCRIBED IN  
9 SUBSECTION (5)(a) OF THIS SECTION IN THE OFFICE'S ANNUAL REPORT TO  
10 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY PURSUANT TO SECTION 25-1.5-101  
11 (1)(w)(III)(A).

12 (6) THE OFFICE SHALL USE AT LEAST FIFTY PERCENT OF THE FUNDS  
13 APPROPRIATED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (7) OF THIS SECTION FOR  
14 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAININGS FOCUSED ON YOUTH, TEENS,  
15 AND YOUNG ADULTS.

16 (7) ON JULY 1, 2024, AND EACH JULY 1 THEREAFTER, THE  
17 GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHALL APPROPRIATE TWO HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND  
18 DOLLARS FROM THE GENERAL FUND TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR THE  
19 ADMINISTRATION OF THIS SECTION. THE DEPARTMENT MAY PAY COSTS  
20 RELATED TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THIS SECTION FROM THE  
21 APPROPRIATION MADE PURSUANT TO THIS SUBSECTION (7).

22 (8) THE OFFICE MAY SEEK, ACCEPT, AND EXPEND GIFTS, GRANTS,  
23 OR DONATIONS FROM PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SOURCES FOR THE PURPOSES OF  
24 THIS SECTION.

25 (9) THIS SECTION IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1, 2033.  
26 BEFORE THE REPEAL, THIS SECTION IS SCHEDULED FOR REVIEW IN  
27 ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 24-34-104.

1           **SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 25-1.5-101, **amend**  
2 (1)(w)(III)(A) as follows:

3           **25-1.5-101. Powers and duties of department - laboratory cash**  
4 **fund - office of suicide prevention - suicide prevention coordination**  
5 **cash fund - dispensation of payments under contracts with grantees**  
6 **- report - definitions.** (1) The department has, in addition to all other  
7 powers and duties imposed upon it by law, the powers and duties  
8 provided in this section as follows:

9           (w) (III) (A) Notwithstanding section 24-1-136 (11)(a)(I), as part  
10 of the duties of the office of suicide prevention, on or before each  
11 November 1, the office of suicide prevention shall submit to the chairs of  
12 the senate health and human services committee and the house of  
13 representatives health, insurance, and environment committee, or their  
14 successor committees, and to the members of the joint budget committee,  
15 a report listing all crisis and suicide prevention programs in the state and  
16 describing the effectiveness of the office of suicide prevention in acting  
17 as the coordinator for crisis and suicide prevention programs. For the  
18 report submitted in 2013 and each year thereafter, the office of suicide  
19 prevention shall include any findings and recommendations it has to  
20 improve crisis and suicide prevention in the state. FOR THE REPORT  
21 SUBMITTED IN 2024 AND EACH YEAR THEREAFTER, THE OFFICE OF SUICIDE  
22 PREVENTION SHALL INCLUDE A SUMMARY OF THE REPORT PURSUANT TO  
23 SECTION 25-1.5-113.5 (5)(b).

24           **SECTION 4.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 24-34-104, **add**  
25 (34)(a)(IX) as follows:

26           **24-34-104. General assembly review of regulatory agencies**  
27 **and functions for repeal, continuation, or reestablishment - legislative**

1 **declaration - repeal.** (34) (a) The following agencies, functions, or both,  
2 are scheduled for repeal on September 1, 2033:

3 (IX) THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM  
4 CREATED IN SECTION 25-1.5-113.5.

5 **SECTION 5. Appropriation.** For the 2024-25 state fiscal year,  
6 \$250,000 is appropriated to the department of public health and  
7 environment for use by the prevention services division. This  
8 appropriation is from the general fund and is based on an assumption that  
9 the division will require an additional 0.3 FTE. To implement this act, the  
10 division may use this appropriation for suicide prevention.

11 **SECTION 6. Safety clause.** The general assembly finds,  
12 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate  
13 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety or for appropriations for  
14 the support and maintenance of the departments of the state and state  
15 institutions.